

**Legislative Testimony
Appropriations Committee
Governor's Bill No. 7027 – An Act Concerning the State Budget for the
Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2019, and Making Appropriations Therefor
Thursday, February 23, 2017**

Dear Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Dr. Mark Desrosiers. I am Past President of the Connecticut State Dental Association, a statewide, professional membership organization representing 70% of all licensed dentists in Connecticut. I have been practicing dentistry in Connecticut since 1988. I am here today to oppose the Governor's proposal to repeal mandated reporting, eliminate the professional assistance account and move the funds to the general fund.

I wish to discuss three issues with this bill:

1. Connecticut already has one of the highest license fees for dentists in our country. Despite this, we supported the recent increase of \$ 5.00 per year to our fee because it was to go to helping fellow health care professionals that suffer from substance abuse (Public Act 15-244 Sections 137 and Public Act 15-5 Sec. 479).
2. HAVEN is the independent organization that exists to support the health and wellness of healthcare providers in Connecticut. It was established in 2007 by CT Gen. Stat. Sec. 19a-12a to provide a confidential treatment program. The \$5 increase in fees was supposed to go to HAVEN to support their mission of assisting health care workers. Despite collecting over \$ 800,000 in fees, the Department of Public Health chooses to not forward the funds to HAVEN. This according to Attorney General Jepsen does not follow the law. I ask you to look into this, release the already collected fees to HAVEN and pursue legal action against whoever is responsible for this action. At the very least, the people responsible should lose their jobs.
3. The Governor's proposed budget adds insult to injury by eliminating the mandate to report substance abuse issues as well as continuing the collect this increased fee but redirecting it to the general fund.

I strongly urge you to leave HAVEN as is, release all funds that are being withheld, not withhold future funds and pursue action against the people responsible for withholding the over \$ 800,000 currently owed to HAVEN.

Respectfully Submitted,

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